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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 002358

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TAGS: KNNP MNUC PARM IR ES

SUBJECT: EL SALVADOR: CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO IRAN/NUCLEAR
ISSUE

REF: STATE 162558

Classified By: Michael A. Butler, Charge, for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: MFA officials told us December 5 they would study the NIE summary and our non-paper, but that El Salvador's basic approach to the Iran/nuclear issue would continue to be cautious. Our interlocutors were especially receptive to the argument that Iran must comply with existing UNSCRs. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) PolCouns delivered reftel demarche December 5 to MFA Deputy Director General for Political Affairs, Nelson Amaya, Director for Asia, Africa, and Oceania, Milton Magana, and Egriselda Gonzalez from MFA's Office of Multilateral Affairs.

¶3. (C) Amaya admitted that his familiarity with the issue and the recently released NIE was almost completely informed by press coverage. PolCouns reviewed the key judgments of the NIE, emphasizing that weapons had been a purpose of Iran's nuclear program and that Iran continued to pursue uranium conversion-related and enrichment-related activities in defiance of two UNSCRs, noting that once Iran mastered enrichment, it could well resume its weapons efforts.

¶4. (C) Amaya said El Salvador's position on the issue would continue to be characterized by caution, partly because of its technical complexity and also because of the indirect impact this issue has on El Salvador. Amaya and Magana pledged to study the NIE summary and the non-paper in order to provide recommendations to the Foreign Minister. Confusion over the technical aspects of the issue aside, both recognized the importance of Iran complying with UNSCRs 1737 and 1747. Amaya promised to share our NIE summary and non-paper with El Salvador's recently opened bilateral/multilateral mission in Vienna and said El Salvador would consider a public statement calling on Iran to comply with the demands of the UN Security Council.

¶5. (C) Comment: Amaya and other MFA officials are handicapped by a limited understanding of the technical issues at play and admit that this issue is not as much of a priority for El Salvador as others. They were quite receptive, though, to the argument that Iran had an obligation to comply with existing UNSCRs.

Butler